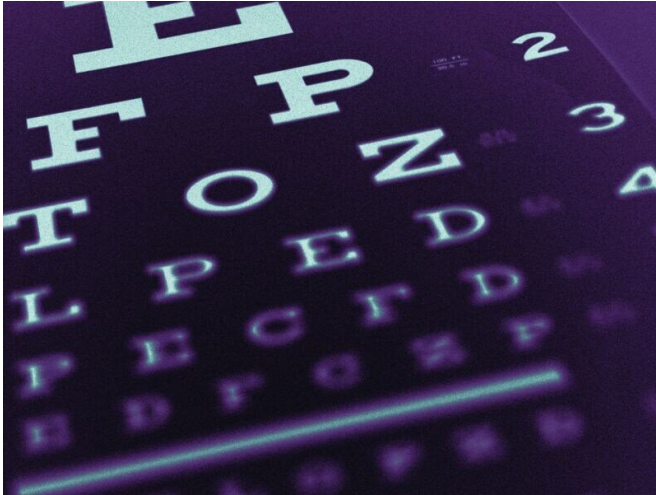


# Pediatric ophthalmologists hit hard financially by COVID-19

15 September 2020



(HealthDay)—Pediatric ophthalmologists are financially struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to research recently published in the *Journal of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus*.

Shira L. Robbins, M.D., from the University of California San Diego in La Jolla, and colleagues from the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Socioeconomic Committee surveyed 416 current U.S. members at the peak of the COVID-19 shutdown, in April 2020, about the pandemic's [economic impact](#) and then interviewed them again in July 2020. Assessed factors included the interim effects on finances and staffing, as well as the expected effect of government aid and future practice changes.

The researchers report that respondents included 32 percent employed physicians (10 percent employed at hospitals and 22 percent at universities) and 68 percent in private practice (17

percent solo, 28 percent multispecialty, and 23 percent group pediatrics). Overall, 93 percent of practices suffered at least a 51 percent loss in clinical revenue during this period and 96 percent of all respondents had a surgical revenue decrease of >51 percent. In July, 52 percent experienced a salary reduction and 26 percent reported receiving less than \$1,000 from the first round of assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. More than half of practices (51 percent) continue to operate with reduced staff compared with pre-COVID-19 levels, and the vast majority (91 percent) expect further staff reductions (up to 25 percent) following completion of Paycheck Protection Program loan requirements.

"The results are sobering and portend access-of-care issues for children with blinding, if not life-threatening, diseases," the authors write. "As pediatric specialists struggle to keep their practices viable, children in America may suffer medical outcomes not anticipated in first-world countries."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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